

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION:

Saturday December 22. 1711.

Tempora Mutantur, nos & Mutamur—

NEver was this Old Saying better Verified than now ; I cannot but be amaz'd to hear the very same People, with the same Tongues, and without any Red in their Cheeks, who a few Years ago, Oppos'd me, and Ruffled me too, for Arguing against *Occasional Conformity*, now Chiming in with an Occasional Bill, or a Law to prevent it ; and what frivolous Pretences ! what lame Reasonings ! what Ridiculous Excuses do they make for it ?

These I shall Examin in their Turns, but grant me your leave, Gentlemen, a little, to express our Wonders of the Circumstances : What Ridicule have I seen made at a certain Tall Man, *wish nothing in him*, as they us'd to say of him ? What a Jest have I seen some honest Gentlemen make of his Character, as an unperforming Cloud ? What a doz'd and bewilder'd Character has been given of a certain Person ! and what Lampoons was the Town full of, when he

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Encumber'd the State ! And now how Careless'd ! how Embrac'd ! and how to gratify a Desire as preposterous as all the rest, how willing are some Men to give up their Friends as a Victim to this Convert, and to his mighty Interest ! nay, how do they abandon the Just and Righteous Interest they had before Espous'd, to oblige a Man of no Interest at all !

What *Cameleon* Disposition is Mankind made of ! How are there some in the World given to *Change* ! It would be Unjust, as well as Offensive for me, to pass any Judgment of the New Occasional Bill, which is depending in the House of *Parliament*, which I profess I have not so much as seen ; but neither do that Honourable House require so much of any Man, that we should part with our Judgment in Compliment to their Persons, and say before we see it, *that it is all Right and Good*, that it is done to Anticipate another Design, prevent a worse Bill, and that there is nothing at all in it, Prejudicial to the *Dissenters*.

For my part I shall, in Deference to the *Parliament*, take care to say nothing at all of it ; but my Observation points at those People without Doors, who, as I note above, change their Note, their Faces, and their Sense of Things every Day, and every Way, just as Parties, not as Truth direct.

These are the just Contempt of all wise and honest Men ; and were it not at the Expence of honest Men, who now are like to be Undone by the Steps these Men are pleas'd at, one would make pleasant Remarks enough here ; but this is too serious to jest with, the Sacrifice is too great, to make Pastime of the Practice ; the Occasional Bill passes, the same worthy *Patriots* that formerly threw it out, now bring it in ; the same People that rejoyc'd in the Disappointment of the High-Church Men, acquiesce now in the Ruin of the *Dissenters*.

Some among them I meet with, who are willing to Vindicate this Step, take upon them to give Reasons why it is thus, but wretched Arguments ! fit for nothing but

to blush at — Such as to be sure are below the Dignity, as well as the Sense of the Noble Persons Concern'd in it, to give. — As 1. That it was done to prevent a worse Bill being brought in — But what was to bring it in ? Where was it preparing ? What good Ground they have to say any such was doing, Not one Word of this can be told us ; so I heard of a Man that pull'd down his House before-hand, that it might not be burnt, but saw no Danger of any Body's setting it on Fire.

Some tell us the Reason why this is Comply'd with, is, That by Concert, they have so mitigated some Things, and obtain'd others which are Equivalent, that the Bill is not the same Thing, and that we have nothing to be Concern'd at in it ; but they do not tell us that the *Effectual* Article is left out, Of Dispossessing for ever all *Dissenters* of every Place or Employment under the Government, or driving them, against their own Principles and Conscience to a total stated Conformity to the Church, which will infallibly Ruin many Hundreds of *Dissenting* Families, or cause them to act against Conscience for Bread, which, I think, is one of the worst kinds of Persecution.

This is the present Case now, I am not Arguing for or against the Bill itself ; let the House of Commons do as Heaven, for our Sins shall permit, or for our Deliverance shall direct ; but wemay, I hope, be allow'd to Attempt a little, the opening of their Eyes, who seem to give up in this Affair an Interest, which once they thought, or at least pretended to think, was twist'd with the general Happiness of Britain — To whom are we making our Court in this ? Who is it that we seek to oblige ? And what is it that we expect from the Persons, to whose mighty Influence this Sacrifice is made ?

Tempora Mutantur ! A Majority of a great Assembly against it Yesterday, and not a Vote in Opposition to-day ; cast out of the House one Day, and pass'd *Nemine Contradicente* the next ; Wonderous Change ! What follows ? *Not & Mutantur* — When by

the Majority, the last Bill was shewn out, we rejoyc'd, and Reason good; when this Bill passes, we acquiesce, we make no Complaint; Whence is this Opiat? How are we doz'd? Who has cast this Charm or ty'd this *Philtre*? Are we awake, or has Heaven demented this Generation, that they should not see when his Judgments impend?—But, says one, what can we do? What Course would you have us take? No, no, Gentlemen, no Course now, nothing to do; I am no Trumpet of Rebellion, you shall not catch me there; you must do nothing but submit, 'tis too late to act; what should be done, should have been done before; you should not have put your selves out of your own Hands, and put your selves into the Hands of those, who have not had Value enough for your Interest, as to put you all into the Scale against one Man—And that a Man, whose Character, even in their own Mouths, was not long before too mean for a Satyr, and below Lampoon.

Well may all that has been said by the People of this Generation, concerning Foreign Affairs, have been expected from such People; How should better be look'd for? They that can acquiesce in the Ruin of the *Dissenters* at Home, no wonder they can give up the *Protestant Princes* Abroad: They that can see no Danger to the Protestant Oppress'd Interest in *Britain*, no wonder they can see no Danger to the Protestant Interest in *Germany*: If they can see no Mischief in Establishing High-Church Tyranny in *England*, how should they see any Mischief in Establishing *Papish* Tyranny at *Vienna*? If they can join in with Persecution in *England*, how should they fear Persecution in *Hungary* and *Silesia*? Such a Doctrine, such a Practice!—Are these then Consequences of the Zeal we have for carrying on the War? Must the *Dissenters* be Sacrific'd to Purchase Hands against a Peace? Why? What Obstacle have they been to Prosecuting the War?—What help will Persecution be to pulling down *France*? Abhor'd Blindness! Where is now your Advocates, for the Measures of

our Leading Men? Let that Mercenary Wretch, your *Observer*, defend this! Have they answer'd your Confidence in them? Till now, I Honour'd their Characters, Vindicated their Conduct, and Valued their Persons; but in this, let others Worship, for I cannot: Are these the Instances of the Ready adhering to the Interest of Truth and Liberty? Is this Defending the Cause of the Protestant Interest? Oh, but there is some SECRET in it which we do not Understand, says an easie Christian that is willing to hope still.—*Enter not into their Secret, O my Soul*, abandoning the Interest of Religion! the Defence of Oppress'd Conscience! the Liberty of Two Millions of Free Subjects, to carry on a Secret! What Secret can this be? Of what Value must this Secret be, that such an Evil must be yielded to, to bring to pass this mighty Good? Is this the Way to Propagate the Nation's Peace? But let us Reason together; Is the Pretender or the Succession in the Case?—Is the Dividing us the first Step to preserve the Succession Or is the Suppressing the *Dissenters* the Way to keep out the Pretender?—Was ever any Argument preposterous like this?

But to this, has Party-Fury led us! and now may the *Dissenters* see on what Staff they have leaned, and into whose Hands they have put the Safety, the Consciences, and the Liberty of their Posterity.

As this will give them Experience, so I hope it will give them Prudence, Unity, Concert, and Sincerity; they may now see to what fatal Issue their *Occasional Compliance* on one Hand, and too tenacious Party-Violence on the other hand, has led them—May he that only can bring Good out of this Evil, regulate their Conduct—Open their Eyes to their own Interest, and shew them the only Way to add Weight to their Party, and Strength to their Interest, *Amen*.

But the Thing is done; the Votes are pass'd, whither next shall the *Dissenters* Turn? But to the Throne, first of God, and then of the Queen. There remains yet a Point between them and their Ruin
pre

prepared, and 'tis yet in Her Majesty to Save them, or give them up — Let us suppose them at Her Majesty's Feet, with their Petition, Presented by Ten Thousand starving Infants, the Children of the poor Dispossess'd Parents, turn'd out of their Employments, and left without Bread, merely because, in Conscience, they cannot and dare not, take the Sacrament in the Church of England; and suppose their Petition in these moving Expressions:

Madam,

YOUR Majesty, as the Common Parent of Your People, is the only Remaining Hope in the Case before us: The Hands of a Million of your Faithful Subjects are stretched out to You; We Claim a Natural Right to Your Royal Compassion, being born Your Subjects, and a Collateral Right to Your Affection, being Your willing Subjects by a Duty mingled with our Affection: We have Cheerfully Assisted and Supported Your Majesty in the War, carried on for the Glory of Your Crown, and Preserving Your Personal Possession: Many Thousands of us have been Ruin'd by the War, and the Losses attending it, and have nothing left, but the Small Salaries in Your Service, to Support our Families, of which we are now to be Divested, without any Offence — We Dissent from Your Church, indeed, but never Separated from Your Interest; for the first we have a Legal Toleration, and in Consideration of our Fidelity in the last, we have Your Majesty's Royal Promise frequently Repeated, That this Toleration shall be preserv'd inviolable.

We most Humbly Plead Your Majesty's Sacred Promise, and that Veracity which we ever Confided in; We are now fallen upon Guiltless, by our Enemies, Betray'd and Abandon'd by our Friends, and have no Recourse under God, but to Your Majesty's Justice and Clemency, beseeching Your Majesty to View the Multitude of Your Innocent Subjects, and their Ruin'd Families, who are to be given up by this Law, to Poverty and Persecu-

on, and to call to Mind the Opposition Your Majesty formerly made with Success to the same Design, and the happy Resolutions Your Majesty made, to take us into Your Royal Protection, express'd in Your said Gracious Promise to preserve Inviolable our Toleration, which We Humbly conceive cannot be, if this Act be suffer'd to pass.

We Beseech Your Majesty in the Humblest manner, That this Attempt may receive a Stop from Your Royal Prerogative, and that it may move Your Royal Compassion, when Your Majesty, with one Breath, with one Word, with one Thought of Your Royal Heart; You shall now Save or Destroy so many Thousands of Your Loyal Subjects, against whom no Crime can be alledg'd, but the meer Conscientious Dissent in the Ceremonies, not the least in the Fundamentals of Religion.

If such an Humble Representation had in such a manner been laid before Her Majesty, and at the same Time Her Majesty knowing by what Party, with what View, and to carry on what Design this Attempt has been Introduc'd, who can tell how God might move Her Majesty, whose Tenderness for her People, without Distinction, is so well known, to prevent the Ruin of so great a Number of Her Subjects?

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This Day is Publish'd,
AN Essay on the History of Parties and Persecution in Britain; beginning with a brief Account of the Test-Act, and an Historical Enquiry into the Reasons, the Original, and the Consequences of the Occasional Conformity of Dissenters. With some Remarks on the several Attempts already made, and now making, for an Occasional Bill. Enquiring how far the same may be esteem'd a Preservation to the Church, or an Injury to the Dissenters. Printed for J. Baker, at the Black-Boy in Pater-Noster-Row. Price 6d.

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